

Washington, DC — Last evening, Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) voted for the Agriculture Appropriations Bill, which invests in conservation programs, protects our food supply, and strengthens our rural communities. — “I am proud to have supported this legislation, which protects our food and provides for the neediest Americans,” said the Congressman, “No child should go to bed hungry in this country, nor should our food be unsafe to eat.”

Specifically, the Agriculture Appropriations bill helps families by funding the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). It eliminates the President’s cut and invests \$233.4 million (four percent) more than the President to feed more than eight million pregnant women, mothers and children next year. Moreover it disregards the President’s proposal to eliminate this food assistance aid for women, infants, children, and the elderly that served nearly 500,000 people monthly in 2007. It increases funding to allow people in five additional states to participate in the program and expand those getting food in states already in the program. This measure also makes sure that the families of soldiers in combat are not penalized under the Food Stamp program. It also rejects the Administration’s proposal to restrict eligibility for food stamps by excluding needy families who are receiving certain other services.

The bill also tackles food safety, fully funding the Food Safety and Inspection Service at USDA, shifting funds to fill vacancies in federal meat inspector positions and investing in research, and funds a transformation of FDA food safety regulations. It also prohibits imported poultry products from China, and sets a timeline for USDA to implement critical country of origin labeling for our meat supply after six years of Republican delays. Recent food scares, about peanut butter and lettuce, have made Americans more concerned about where their food comes from. Additionally, it bill prevents cuts to the Food and Drug Administration’s field operations and provides additional funding for key activities including processing generic drug applications, drug safety reviews and monitoring prescription drug advertisements.

“Global warming and our addiction to oil are some of the greatest challenges of our time, putting at risk our economy, our environment, and our national security,” added Congressman Sestak. “Conservation needs to be a part of any strategy to halt it. This bill provides the funding for programs created by the Farm Bill, which passed earlier this year.”

Given Congressman Sestak’s commitment to protecting our environment, he was pleased with the bill’s commitment to renewal energy. This legislation nearly doubles funding for renewable energy loans and grants to businesses to grow our economy, create new jobs, lower energy

prices, and reduce global warming. The bill provides resources for research, aid to farmers and ranchers, and loans to businesses. It also restores many programs the President would have cut or eliminated, including the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Resource Conservation and Development, and the watershed programs. This legislation provides \$979.4 million, \$127.6 million above 2007 and \$154.7 million above the President's request, for conservation efforts and community development. It also restores many of the programs slated for major reductions in the president's request, including the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Resource Conservation and Development, and the watershed programs which are funded \$75 million – more than double last year's levels.

Since his election to Congress, Congressman Sestak has worked on the issue of proper watershed management. One of the biggest threats to our rivers, lakes, and streams comes from the indirect runoff of pollutants from our everyday lives. Oil from our city streets and parking lots, excess fertilizer and herbicides that runoff from our lawns, and animal waste from farms all find its way into our rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters. He has met with experts from the district and work on three phases to accomplish our watershed goals while also providing for the environmental restoration of our creeks: (1) Have the Army Corps of Engineers conduct a Reconnaissance Study, which would cost about \$250,000 and which the Congressman will seek federal funding for, using existing information to identify the problems, needs and opportunities regarding water resources in the study area. He will also seek out interested, non-Federal entities like the state of Pennsylvania to partner with the Corps for the study (historically, Pennsylvania has not agreed to cost share Feasibility Studies like this one, even though similar agencies of other states frequently participate. He is committed to working with Governor Rendell and district representatives from our state legislature to ensure this partnership happens). (2) Once the non-federal partner is identified, he will work with all interested parties to conduct a Feasibility study with the Army Corps of Engineers, which would consist of detailed data collection and evaluation, formulation of several alternative plans, and a report making specific recommendations to Congress. This process typically cost around \$2-4 million, which is cost-shared between federal and non-federal partners, and could take from 2 to 5 years depending on how soon the money was available. (3) Last, once the Feasibility Study is completed and the resulting report is submitted to Congress, the recommended project can then receive Congressional authorization for construction, which the Congressman will pursue through the Water Resources Development Act.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from

Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.